

CSELR EIS SUBMISSION

Major Project Assessments
Department of Planning
23-33 Bridge Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

Re: CSELR – response to Environmental Impact Statement

I do not agree with the CSELR as stated in the CSELR EIS

I wish to voice my opposition for the proposed design of the CBD and South East Light Rail project (CSELR) as described in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated November 2013. I do not agree with the proposal as stated in the EIS document.

My concerns in relation to the CSELR project and the EIS, with particular interest with the Surry Hills to Moore Park West route, are summarised below:

1. Lack of business case for overall project and cost benefit of possible routes through Surry Hills
2. Devonshire street is not capable of being the spine of the SE Network / not sustainable
3. Vastly superior alternative routes has been identified – Foveaux and Devonshire sub-surface
4. No genuine community consultation has been engaged in.
5. Unacceptable noise levels, and times through a densely populated suburb
6. Size, speed and frequency of the light rail vehicles (LRV's)
7. Construction impact on small businesses and residents
8. Road closures during and post construction
9. Acquisition of 69 homes
10. Dislocation of Surry Hills
11. Loss of Amenity
12. Traffic congestion
13. Loss of large historic trees
14. Impact on parklands
15. Access to properties along the route - businesses, residents, elderly and disabled
16. Significant devalue on properties along the route with no compensation from the
17. Government
18. Loss of car parking

BUSINESS CASE – LACKING IN FACTS AND DATA

The Government has failed to provide a business case for the project (although promised). Freedom of Information requests for the business case including a cost benefit analysis of light rail (vs. other forms of transport) and for the various potential Surry Hills routes has been ignored. The CSELR EIS is based on Devonshire Street only. As a taxpayer and community member of Surry Hills I want to understand why Devonshire Street is the Government's preferred route for the spine of the South East network, when various other options, that are existing traffic corridors, appear to be superior.

The Government proposed Surry Hills route involves the demolition of 69 homes and negative impact on visual amenity, significant increase in noise, financial impact on small businesses, affect on parklands and trees. It will also have the light rail having the right of way over 5 major roads and 17 minor roads. The light rail respects the existing traffic flow along the South East route until it does a bootleg from the Stadiums, under Anzac Parade/Moore Park, across the Eastern Distributor, and then at grade (street) level across South Dowling, Bourke, Crown, Elizabeth and Chalmers Streets.

A local Engineer has identified an alternative cut and cover proposal along Fitzroy/Foveaux Streets. The Foveaux route delivers greater capacity (through a third line), avoids traffic issues with major intersections, has less residential impact, increased speed for LRV's that will decrease travel times, less visual impact on the local area and no long term noise impact for residents. It also provides for a station in the centre of Surry Hills, and within the area where many buses will be cancelled, rather than one that is a 5-minute walk from Central station (Ward Park). Transport for NSW has admitted to the local Engineer Robin Bean, that they did not give this proposal appropriate time, money or resources, and therefore I believe it has not been given genuine consideration.

The Government has made different unsubstantiated public statements for rejecting the Foveaux sub-surface; in some cases technical, in others it is about it resulting in "substantially greater construction impacts on local communities and businesses". I do not agree with this statement, with many residents along the Foveaux Street route expressing support and preference for this route (over the Devonshire Street route). There are 1,000 online signatures supporting the Foveaux sub-surface route (and 4,000 written supporting an alternative to Devonshire Street).

It appears that the Government has a "reason" for each target audience and in this case, appears to wanting to drive a wedge between those on Devonshire Street and Foveaux Street.

The point to be made is that construction along Foveaux Street should be more contained and should have less impact, and superior delivery on KPI's. While Devonshire Street will have chaos during construction, and also for all time into the future with the operational impacts not only on Devonshire street but on traffic flowing north to south and the risk of accidents on the narrow heavily pedestrianised street.

It is very important to differentiate between the construction period and the long time impacts. Foveaux sub-surface is designed to minimise impact and optimise deliverables for all stakeholders.

A reason for rejecting the sub-surface (Foveaux and Devonshire) and Tunnel under Surry Hills was cost. However, costs should be considered, not only as construction costs, but also in the context of long term operational benefits of the Light Rail, with the benefits and costs of the best route, from the point of view of not achieving the stated objectives of a efficient service, maximum capacity and convenience for passengers along the whole route, but also minimum impact on the community, minimum traffic dislocation, maximum opportunity for future growth, maximum safety, fastest service and maximum capacity between Central and the Moore Park sports and events precinct and least impact on the streetscape, commercial activity, car , bicycle and pedestrian traffic, parking, trees and parkland amenity.

I understand there may be some technical challenges with the Foveaux sub-surface (which are to be substantiated) however believe they are not insurmountable, using modern technology. Direct construction costs may be greater, however the ongoing benefits outlined for the Foveaux route, far outweigh these, and will benefit the whole route between Circular Quay to Randwick/Kingsford, and future network expansions.

The Government's preferred Devonshire Street route is not a sustainable route given it has a maximum capacity of 9,000 per hour each way, and will be at capacity within a few years of operation. It therefore does not have the ability to extend further to areas such as Maroubra and Botany, given the Devonshire Street surface route does not have the potential to expand to a third track. The Minister advised Surry Hills residents in March 2013 that the route through Surry Hills would be the "spine of the South East network". Given the Devonshire Street surface route does not deliver this future proof solution, I do not support of the Devonshire Street surface route. If the Government were insistent of this direction between the Stadiums and Central (over the more direct Foveaux route) then my preference would be a Devonshire Street sub-surface.

Request:

1. Business case study for transport solutions for the South East Sydney, to be made public
2. Cost benefit of all possible routes through Surry Hills (surface, sub-surface and tunnels), to be made public
3. Genuine modern technical consideration to the Foveaux and Devonshire sub-surface routes; including cost benefit based on 2026
4. The subsurface routes (Foveaux or Devonshire) should be the default option for light rail transit through Surry Hills

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION – COMPLETE LACK OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION BY ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

There has been no community consultation apart from a resident-forced "information" session where the Minister advised we had no choice but to accept the route and offered an A3 flyer as proof this was the best route. The community is not seen as stakeholders in relation to this project and has never been consulted. This is not acceptable.

Request:

1. Genuine community consultation with the local community – residents and business owners about the route through Surry Hills, design and assimilation.

LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES (LRV'S) SIZE, NOISE IMPACTS

The proposed LRVs are 45 m. long, which is more than 50% longer than the LRVs on the existing Inner West route (those vehicles are 29 m. long) and two and a half times longer than the existing red bendy buses now operating in Sydney. They will be by far the largest trams ever to operate in Australia. The EIS proposes to move large numbers during peaks, but are only appropriate on dedicated rights of way, not on residential streets.

Surry Hills is a quiet residential neighbourhood with occasional noise from traffic passing through, weekend visitors to the cafes/ shops on offer, and infrequent groups passing by to attend events at the Stadiums. The increased noise from these occurrences is explicable and do not last long, hence they feed the life of the suburb. The light rail proposal will see light rail vehicles passing every 2-3 minutes. This will see maximum noise of 75-83dB every time a vehicle passes. This is far in excess of the noises residents experience now.

The acceptable noise levels have also been changed by the State Government to match those of heavy rail. According to the CSELR EIS residents would be expected to deal with "daytime" noise levels up until 10:00PM. The light rail is proposed to run from 5AM until 1AM. This is an unacceptable and stark difference to the current living conditions of residents. I also understand the light rail vehicles may move all night to return to the opposite end of the line or for repairs. Again this is a very different prospect that is an unacceptable request to Surry Hills residents who have invested in a quiet suburban lifestyle despite, being close to the city.

I also believe the noise levels measured by TfNSW were taken outside of a local pub. This is unacceptable as the premises in question have loud live music nights, salsa dancing and trivia nights with the windows open. This is not a fair representation of the usual amenity for locals.

Request:

1. The LRV's are no longer than 29m long if traveling through residential areas at the surface level. If the LRVs are longer than 29m, then they are only to travel along specifically tailored routes (such as a sub-surface or tunnel) and or dedicated rights of way (not on residential streets).
2. Speed to be reduced to 20km from South Dowling Street to Elizabeth Street
3. Operational times through Surry Hills must limited to 05:30 to 23:30
4. No light rail movement between 23.30 and 5.30
5. Frequency limited to a minimum of 5 minutes gap of both LRV's
6. Noise and vibration levels delivered well within the EPA guidelines
7. Continuous rail to reduce noise at expansion joints to be used between South Dowling Street to Elizabeth Streets
8. Maximum noise reducing beds to be installed below the tracks
9. Base to be constructed in a way that limits vibration
10. Significant screening in residential areas must take place

VISUAL IMPACT AND LOSS OF TREES/PARKLANDS

I am concerned with the large volume of large and historic trees that will be removed along the route and in the parklands. There will also be a loss of parklands both during and following construction. Many people in the area either live in apartments or have very small yards. This loss of green space will hugely impact their living standards and wellbeing.

It is suggested that a large number of overhead cables would be introduced as part of the light rail through Surry Hills. It is also suggested that substation/s in Surry Hills will be above ground.

Request:

1. All parklands should be replaced 1:1 with improvements on facilities
2. The Government has suggested they will replace trees 1:7 – this should be enforced with at least 1:1 in the Surry Hills area
3. Light rail and electrical cables to be placed underground to reduce the visual clutter and enable trees to be planted to replace those being cut down
4. All substations must be below ground
5. The route of the light rail through Wimbo Park / Olivia Gardens is along the Central route
6. Re-instate the tree that was removed from the Edgely Street Playground. There is currently a vacant space where a tree was that provided shade for this much loved playground.
7. Incorporate a gated playground in the redesign of Wimbo Park.
8. Upgrade Ward Park playground and parkland amenities.

SAFETY

Safety is a consideration in this built up area as Devonshire Street has numerous licensed venues, there are 2 child care centres on Devonshire Street, a school on Bourke Street, access required to the Church for weddings/ services/ funerals, and 1,000 residents of Northcott building.

Request:

1. The safety issues need to be fully reviewed by independent consultants and the full reports made available
2. The speed must be restricted to a maximum of 20kmph through this section
3. Frequency limited to a minimum of 5 minutes gap between both LRV's

LOSS OF AMENITIES DURING CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

A substantial part Ward Park has been earmarked as a construction depot. My 3 children and myself use this park and playground daily and it is a major asset to our life in Surry Hills.

Request:

1. The Playground remains open during the construction period providing a safe place for children to play
2. Noise considerations due to the fact that small children are using the park
3. Safe and easy access to the playground be maintained
4. To compensate to for the loss of space and inconvenience additional temporary amenities could be provided like a weekly jumping castle, petting zoo or a display suite where children could come and play with trains.

PARKING

In an area where parking is limited, Surry Hills already have serious parking issues. I do not agree with the parking study included in the EIS; which is based on one day. The light rail project suggests removal of a further 133 parking spots, just along Devonshire Street alone. Whilst we wish to reduce reliance on cars, many residents do need them for work and family life. The small businesses rely on their customers having easy access to their business through parking.

Request:

1. Resident/Commercial Only spaces in selected areas and temporary parking permits for the occasional visitors of residents and also for trades people. This allows those that have a genuine need to park in the area - residents and businesses - greater access to dedicated parking.
2. Please advise whether residential parking zones will be re-assigned or changed due to change in parking conditions along Devonshire Street.

TRAFFIC

The Devonshire route crosses a number of major arterial roads. It is suggested that the light rail will have uninterrupted priority at all crossings. Indications are that at peak times, when the roads are their busiest, there will be a 45m train every 2-3min in each direction. A simple calculation means that a train will cross the arterial road approximately every 90 seconds. The trains are stated to be doubled in length when there are events at the Sydney Cricket Grounds and Sydney Football Stadiums, thus reducing this gap. The number of vehicles that can then cross-junctions at South Dowling, Bourke, Crown, Elizabeth and Chalmers Streets, will be significantly reduced and access between the city and the South severed! TfNSW has offered no resolution to the traffic problems that will be caused by the light rail.

Nickson Street has been identified to become a "left in" "left out" only. This would cause a major inconvenience for both residents and businesses on this street. Current travel times would be increased by up to 20mins by not having direct access to Bourke Street and not being able to turn right into Nickson Street or Wilshire Street for those who have off street car parking.

Request:

1. The frequency of LRV's should be limited to a minimum of 5 minutes to ensure a suitable gap to allow pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to cross in safety
2. Allow traffic to and from Nickson Street "right out" and "right in" and Wilshire Street to allow "right in"

COMPENSATION

This route see the loss of at least 69 homes with people unable to buy back in the area they have made their home. Many residents are elderly and will not cope with the stress of this type so late in their life. The value of other residences and commercial buildings along the route will also be devalued with some residents already finding they are unable to sell their home due to the stigma of being on a major transport corridor.

Request:

1. Those residents financially impacted by the development of the light rail should be compensated for the loss of value; including acquisition and properties along the route affected.

BUSINESSES

TfNSW claim they have spoken to all businesses along the route however this is not correct and many businesses have stated that they have never been consulted. TfNSW advertised figures show only 100 businesses along the entire route have been surveyed. There are over 60 along Devonshire Street alone and the impact on these businesses will be immense with many not being able to survive the construction period alone. Cafes and restaurants will have a difficult time as the streetscape and amenity will be changed permanently with customers not wishing to sit to “enjoy” a meal with noisy trains going past at 75-83dB. These businesses residents form the heart of Surry Hills and this will ruin the suburb.

Request:

1. Genuine consultation with business owners and operators about the construction of the light rail, with immediate support in the event of an incident.
2. Compensation to business for loss of income due to the construction and long-term impact of the light rail.

In summary, if the CSELR project is to proceed, I request that all possible Surry Hills routes be technically reviewed and supported with a cost benefit report (to be made public) demonstrating the preferred route and how it is suitable for the spine of the South East light rail network, enabling future expansion, and ensuring sustainability.

And I request genuine community consultation, which will help a better outcome for all in the short and long term, and ensure a more positive process for all stakeholders.

I am one of the thousands of people who have signed the PUSH Petition calling for an alternative Surry Hills route, and believe a sub-surface route (Foveaux or Devonshire) should be the default option.

Yours sincerely,



Senta Hoyne
Nickson Street
Surry Hills